

## Message #5

## Exodus 2:11-25

In Romans 8:28, Paul says concerning the sovereignty of God, that “we know God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.” Now, Paul does not say God uses some things or only good things; he says God uses all things, which includes the good and the bad, for our good and for His purposes. Never is that point seen any clearer than when you come to the life of Moses.

So far we are seeing in this book of Exodus an amazing display of the sovereign, providential sovereignty of God in preserving Moses’ life. The events we see here are not the kind of events we would script to make a great deliverer of Israel. We would probably have said, “Let’s select a nice Hebrew young man, who has been trained in a nice Hebrew home and has been instructed by the Hebrew religious leaders and gone to a nice Hebrew religious school.” But that is not how God did it.

The man God chose to use to deliver His people did not come from circumstances you and I would have scripted. The man God would raise up to become His key man to lead His nation came out of a background that was bizarre. In fact, Dr. Warren Wiersbe said when you examine the background of Moses and the way God actually prepared him to lead, we come to terms with the fact that God’s ways certainly are not our ways (*Be Delivered*, p. 22).

**GOD SOVEREIGNLY PREPARES MOSES TO LEAD HIS NATION OUT OF EGYPTIAN BONDAGE BY SOME VERY UNUSUAL, NEGATIVE PREPARATORY EVENTS THAT TAKE PLACE OVER A PERIOD OF MANY YEARS.**

Now before we tackle this, let me say that Moses is not looking for this job and he does not want this job. He is not out seeking to do God’s will with his life. He is not in a church setting or prayer meeting like Paul and Barnabas were when God called them (Acts 13:1-3). He is the last guy you would ever expect God to choose to use to lead His people. But this was God’s choice.

**UNUSUAL PREPARATORY EVENT #1 – Moses grew up as an Egyptian. 2:11a**

Now Steven gives us inspired commentary on what happened between the years that Moses real mother turned her son over to Pharaoh’s daughter. Steven says, “Moses was educated in all the learning of the Egyptians and he was a man of power in words and deeds” (Acts 7:22).

Many believe that Moses was actually being groomed to become the next Pharaoh. Now the Egyptians, at the time, offered the best secular education that was in existence. They were skilled in engineering and math and astronomy. We know that they were very skilled in medicine and they certainly knew how to embalm bodies (Gen. 50:26).

**We learn from Acts 7:23 that Moses was nearing the age of 40 when things started to happen.** So Moses had years and years of training and education as an Egyptian. So 40 years have transpired between Exodus 2:10 and Exodus 2:11.

Moses is writing this and he doesn't dwell on his great Egyptian education, he gets to the heart of what God wanted. If in fact it is true that Moses was being groomed to become the next Pharaoh, Moses doesn't even mention it. He glosses right over this fact. Furthermore, if he is so highly viewed in Egypt, God is going to sovereignly need to do something very dramatic if He is going to get Moses to lead His people out of Egypt, to the Promised Land.

You do not have to grow up in a nice Christian environment to be greatly used by God. You do not have to attend a Christian school or Christian college to be greatly used by God. You can live and work in a secular world and be educated in a secular school and become a mighty man or woman of God. If you don't believe that—just look at Moses.

Moses was 40 (Acts 7:23) when God started moving him and he was 80 when he went to deliver Israel (Ex. 7:7). You don't have to be a young person to have God use you for powerful things. It doesn't matter what the age; when any of us purpose to do God's will, God will use us. Moses' greatest moments in life were in his later years of life.

**UNUSUAL PREPARATORY EVENT #2** – Moses sees an Egyptian mistreating a Hebrew. **2:11b**

In Acts 7:23, God put in Moses' heart to go visit his Israelite brothers. It is possible that Moses was beginning to recognize or sense he was to be a leader of Israel.

Now, two times in **verse 11** it is brought out that Moses saw something negative happening to “his brethren.” What this tells us is that even though Moses was well-educated in Egyptian culture, he saw himself as a Hebrew and not an Egyptian. In fact, Hebrews 11:24 says that by faith, when Moses had grown, he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He saw himself as a Hebrew. In those formative years, Moses' mother had obviously communicated important truth about his Israeli heritage.

Now it is obvious that as Moses grew to be 40-years-old, life had not gotten any better for the Hebrews. They were still being worked hard and Moses even saw an Egyptian “beating” a Hebrew.

Now the word “beating” (macah) is one that not only refers to striking or smiting, but also slaughtering (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 471). It is probable that what Moses saw was an Egyptian who was beating a Hebrew literally to death. This was much more than just some discipline action, this Egyptian was in the process of killing this Hebrew.

**UNUSUAL PREPARATORY EVENT #3** – Moses kills and buries the Egyptian. **2:12**

Now the text says that Moses “looked this way and that,” which means he premeditated this killing. This Egyptian was brutal to the Hebrew people and Moses decided to take him out.

This murder was no accident. Moses deliberately killed this man and then quickly buried him in the sand. There was plenty of sand in Egypt, and Moses buried him in it. This would be the quickest way to cover up the body and get rid of it.

Now let's pause here a moment; you must admit this is not the story of a young man who goes off to Bible College or seminary so he can serve God. You don't expect God to be preparing His man in a premeditated murder scenario, but this is exactly what God was sovereignly doing. God can greatly use people who come from bizarre backgrounds.

#### **UNUSUAL PREPARATORY EVENT #4 – The Hebrews don't support Moses. 2:13-14**

Doing God's will may be a very lonely proposition. It certainly was for Moses. You would think the Hebrews would be happy that they have someone who is willing to stand up and fight for them, but that is not what happened.

Moses went out the next day and he saw two Hebrews fighting among themselves. Moses asked the aggressor why he was striking his companion. Now the word "strike" (tachah) is different than the word used in **verse 11**. This word indicates that the man had been knocked down (*Ibid.*, p. 863). Moses is simply trying to stop a fight.

When Moses questioned the Hebrew, he said who made you the "prince" or "judge" over us? The point is are you intending to kill us like you killed the Egyptian? By using these two nouns "prince" and "judge," this was a very sarcastic response to Moses. There is no thank you, no respect, and no honor. Moses realized everyone knows about the killing and he is not even getting support from his own Hebrew family, who he was supposed to lead.

Great leaders for God will probably not be recognized as great leaders initially by their own family. Great leaders of God don't always come from a spotless background without blemishes or failures.

#### **UNUSUAL PREPARATORY EVENT #5 – Moses flees to Midian. 2:15-22**

When the Pharaoh heard the story that Moses had killed an Egyptian, he wanted to kill Moses; so according to **verse 15**, Moses fled to the "land of Midian." Fleeing to a remote, wilderness area is all part of the sovereignty of God and it was a good move. Moses could not say "Well, since I believe in God's sovereignty, I'll just stay here in Egypt and walk around the streets and expect God to protect me." He had to take personal steps to protect himself, which he did. Elijah did the same thing after he had killed the false prophets of Baal. He too, fled to a wilderness area (I Kings 19:1-4). **Trusting in God's sovereignty does not mean you stop using your brains.**

Now the Midianites were descendants of Abraham, through his wife Keturah (Gen. 25:2). Midian was the fourth son of Abraham and Keturah.

They lived in a very sparse desert area southeast of Israel, in northwest Arabia, south of the Dead Sea. As near as I can determine, Moses traveled about 200 miles and they were tough desert miles. Now what possibly could God be doing in sending Moses to this desert area? He was training him to lead. Moses would need knowledge of the wilderness and desert to lead Israel and this location would be a good training area for Moses.

In the mountains out west, if you are going to guide people up into those mountains, you better know something about those mountains. If you are a novice leading others, you can get yourself and those you are leading in serious trouble. The same is true for wilderness travel. You need knowledge. God would use this geographical location to train Moses.

When Moses got into this land he sat down by a well. At this point in his life he is a fugitive on the run. He obviously sat down for refreshment and recuperation purposes. He is not looking for anymore trouble, but trouble is about to find him, which is all part of the sovereignty of God. As he is sitting at the well, a series of seven Midianite events occur:

**Midianite Event #1** - Seven daughters of a Midian priest came to the well to water their flocks. **2:16**

Now, notice that Moses is about to find himself in a context with a Midianite priest. He had obviously previously been living in a context of Egyptian religion and now he is in a context of Midianite religion. But God's hand was on him and protected him from all of these false religions and Moses would become a man known for communicating and writing the true Word of God.

Every day these seven girls took their father's flock of sheep to get a drink. Every day they drew water out of a well and then filled the water troughs to water the flock.

**Midianite Event #2** - Some shepherds came to drive them away. **2:17a**

Apparently, as soon as they would get the water in the trough, a group of shepherds would come and drive them and their flock away and let their sheep drink first. This apparently happened every day.

**Midianite Event #3** - Moses stood up for the daughters and helped water their flocks. **2:17b**

On this particular day, Moses was at the well and when they came to drive off the girls, he stood up for them and helped them and they watered their flock first.

**Midianite Event #4** - The daughters went back and told their father what Moses had done. **2:18-19**

Now the daughters went back home and the father realized they normally do not get home so early. This apparently was some sort of daily ritual; the girls would draw water and the shepherds would chase them away and they would get home at the same time every day.

On this particular day, the father realized they were home early and wanted to know why. The girls said some Egyptian not only chased the shepherds away, he drew out the water for us. Now this tells us that Moses was dressed like, looked like and talked like an Egyptian, according to these Midianite girls.

**Midianite Event #5** - The father invited Moses to eat and live with them. **2:20-21a**

The father's clan name was "Reuel," and he wanted to know where this Egyptian man was and told the daughters to go invite him. There had been much debate about the name of Moses' father-in-law, because the Bible identifies him with three different names.

Here the man's name is Reuel. In Exodus 3:1; 4:18; 18:1, Moses' father-in-law is called Jethro; and in Numbers 10:29 and Judges 4:11, Moses father-in-law is called Hobab.

Now if you carefully notice Numbers 10:29, it is stated that Hobab is the son of Reuel. This would be the family clan priestly line. Most men had two or more names. So probably Reuel is the priestly clan name and Jethro and Hobab were two other names which all refer to the same person. One may be the Egyptian name and the other the Midianite name.

**Midianite Event #6** - The father gave Moses his daughter Zipporah to be his wife. **2:21b**

This is the ultimate level of hospitality. The father not only gave Moses a meal, he gave him one of his daughters. What father wouldn't want a courageous man like Moses to be your son-in-law?

We don't know how Zipporah felt about all of this. We don't know if she was romantically drawn to Moses or why her father selected her of all the seven girls. But this is what happened.

**Midianite Event #7** – Moses' wife had a son he named Gershom. **2:22**

Moses named his son "Gershom," which is an admission that he was a foreigner living in a foreign land. In spite of all of the good things that had happened to him, he realized I am not yet where I am supposed to be. Midian was a foreign land. Egypt was a foreign land, but God was about to use Moses to take His people to their "Promised Land."

**UNUSUAL PREPARATORY EVENT #6** – Israel cries out to God for deliverance. **2:23-25**

Now, for the next 40 years Moses would spend time in Midian. During that time, the Egyptian Empire was successfully expanding under the leadership of the Pharaoh King who was probably Thutmose III.

So big things were happening in Egyptian history, but God's Word doesn't bring that up; what it says in **verse 23** is that "the king of Egypt died."

This sets the stage for Moses no longer being a fugitive in Egypt. He could go back as a prophet of God and go to the Pharaoh and demand that he let Israel go.

Now, if you were living at the time, you would not think that the real work of God is taking place 200 miles away with a guy living in a Midian desert. You would think all of the action was in Egypt. But God had His plan in motion and He was preparing Moses. **Preparation is critical to the service of God.** God had been preparing Moses for 80 years and He was about to use him in a major way.

Things had fallen apart for the Israelites back in Egypt. They probably thought that things would get easier with the death of this Pharaoh, but things did not get better.

**Things got so bad they finally started to cry out to God for help.** It took all of the terrible and horrible things that happened to Israel to finally get her to the place where she would cry out to God for help.

When she did as **verses 24-25** says, “God heard their groaning” and God “remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.” God “saw” what was happening and God took special “notice” of this situation and He was about to intervene. He was about to make Himself known.

None of this was based on Israel’s merit. This was not based on Israel’s works. It was based on the fact that God had made a covenant of grace with Israel and when she finally cried out to Him, He said I am going to save you.

He had his man right where he needed him to be. Israel didn’t know it. Moses didn’t know it. But He was God’s man and all of these unusual events had all been orchestrated by God.